

Method and System for Rating Users, User-Contributed Items, Groupings of Related User-Contributed Items and Other Items

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ABSTRACT

10 A method and system for constructing, applying and distributing ratings of users, user-contributed items, groupings of related user-contributed items and other items in a network environment. Users have an opportunity to rate each instance of one user interacting with other users, referred to herein as an "item." Ratings of items contributed by or associated with a particular user are used to construct measurements of the user's competence and credibility as a participant in a networked environment, called herein "Expertise" and "Regard." Either Expertise or Regard can be used as a factor in determining the relative weight assigned to each user's evaluations of items contributed by or associated with other users, producing a measure of the relevance, accuracy and importance of a particular item, referred to herein as item "Quality." For example, the Expertise or Regard of users rating a particular discussion group posting might be used to weight their ratings in a calculation of the posting's Quality. The described embodiments of applicants' invention also include methods enabling users to "Vouch" for and "Discredit" items contributed by another user by associating their own Expertise or Regard with such items. Certain embodiments calculate Caliber, which is a measure of groupings of user contributed items. Certain embodiments will construct an environment in which users provide ratings as a natural part of navigating through items.

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